AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A spring steel comprising:

C: 0.5 to 0.8% by mass (hereinafter, referred to as %),

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.5% or less including 0%,

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities, wherein

the Si content and the Cr content satisfy the following formula (2):

$$(0.8\times[Si])+[Cr] \geq 3.0 \quad \ldots (2)$$

wherein, [Si] and [Cr] respectively represent the Si content (%) and the Cr content (%).

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the Mn content is 0.5% to 1.5%.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the Cr content is 1.5 to 2.6%.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The spring steel according to claim 1, further comprising at least one selected from

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%, and

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the V content is 0.05 to 0.5%.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 5, wherein the Mn content is 0.5% to 1.5%.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The spring steel according to claim 5, wherein the Cr content is ~~1.3% to 4.0%~~ 1.5 to 2.6%.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 5, further comprising at least one selected from:

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%, and

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 1, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.5% or less including 0%,

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 5, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.05 to 0.5%

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 8, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.05 to 0.5%

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%,

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 1, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 5, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.05 to 0.5%

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The spring steel according to claim 8, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.05 to 0.5%

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%,

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.